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595 the guests have any questions, it is her girl-companion that must answer. The bride may at the most nod in affirmation.

She remains in her "hermitage" for some months before she is finally permitted to live with the rest of the household.[5]

The following description is chiefly that of the main Cherkess tribe, the Kabardians.

The *kalym* has been paid and the day of the wedding agreed upon. The relatives of the bridegroom begin the necessary wedding preparations. The odour of steaming beer and of the finest dainties creates a distinctive atmosphere, peculiar to a Kabardian wedding. On the eve of the marriage a group of men gallop through the *aul* inviting relatives to a preparatory feast, on the occasion of which a collection is taken to cover some of the expenses of the coming wedding, e. g., purchase of a veil for the bride, chartering of a bridal wagon.

On the following day young men fully-armed gather at the house of the groom and noisely gallop off to the bride's house. The bridegroom, however, does not go with them but "hides" at his best-man's house.[6] By doing so he becomes temporarily an adopted son *(kan)* of the latter's sib. A young companion called *shatso-kot* must always be at his side to protect him.

When the riders (or to be more exact, the bridal procession) reach the bride's house, her attendant, whom the riders brought along, is taken to the women's quarters, while the rest, after having feasted and danced till late into the night, are given lodging either in the house of the bride or of one of the neighbours.

Immediately after breakfast on the following day, the unusual hustle peculiar to a Cherkess wedding is observed outside the bride's house. The horses are being harnessed, the bride's belongings are being packed carefully but hurriedly into a trunk and put on the specially decorated bridal wagon. The bride herself is inside the house, being attired in her finest clothes. From her hair hangs a long white ribbon reaching to the ground. She is veiled, or rather, wrapped in a large white shawl. Her wedding dress differs but slightly from the ordinary Cherkess dress, except that it is made of more costly material. She is assisted on to the wagon and takes her place next to her ever-faithful girl-attendant. As soon as the bridal procession begins to move, the young men of the *aul*, all on horseback, try to snatch the caps away from the guests and thus begin the usual bridal horseraces. When the more "dignified" part of the procession enters the village of the groom, a wedding song is sung. By this time the racers have rested a bit and are ready to break into another wild chase. They again snatch one another's caps, throwing them on the ground, and as the rider gallops past one of the caps, he tries his skill at shooting a hole through it.

The bride is then taken by two women into the women's quarters, whilst outside the cracks of pistols and guns continue. The bride slowly sits down on a specially prepared bench, covered with a carpet. All eyes are fixed on her as a girl-friend of hers has the honour of removing the shawl.

While the riders outside are enjoying their beer, the youth of the village armed with long poles occupy a place difficult for the horsemen to pass. The

[5] Seidlitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 f; Deržavin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[6] C. Hahn, *Kaukasische Reisen und Studien*, p. 40.

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The "Reconciliation" however is not yet over. The following morning an *arba* (Caucasian two-wheeled wagon) drawn by two oxen goes through the village and every family before whose house the *arba* halts is obliged to donate a chicken. In the evening a cartload of chickens arrives, destined for a special "Reconciliation" feast exclusively for women, on which occasion the groom by accepting some beer from his mother is finally "reconciled" also with her.

True, the "Reconciliation" may be over, but the marriage ceremonies are not. Two days later there is more feasting, more drinking, and the so-called *shinak-gagerōs* (i. e., "the twirling of a wooden cup with a long handle") take place. The one toward whom the cuphandle points on stopping after having been twirled must drink its contents. The young people who take part in this drink-feast do not leave the groom's home till there is no more beer left to refill the cup. The old folks have their turn in the celebration in the evening, when the young are obliged to serve the old. One of the main features on the programme is the obligation of all the "old-timers" to take a turn at dancing, ending with a dance of the host and hostess, who, however, have the privilege of exemption from dancing if they drink a cup of beer instead. On this occasion the Kabardian minnesingers called *geguako* are especially welcome. They travel from village to village, playing on their two-stringed instruments, singing and composing beautiful lyrics[20] as the German minnesingers and the French and Italian troubadours once used to do. To each well-wishing of the *geguako* the guests answer with a joyful "Amen!," confirming their "So be it!" with a sip of beer.[21]

The ceremony of thrice walking around the hearth constitutes an important part of the Cherkess wedding just as in Abkhazia.[22]

The official marriage contract is made by representatives of the bride and groom in the presence of the local mullah. Holding both representatives by the hand, he first asks the representative of the bride: "Do you take A as husband for B?" The answer is a simple "Yes!" He then asks the representative of the groom: "Do you take B as wife for A?" "Yes!" This interrogation is repeated a second and a third time. The mullah then recites a prayer and all present, raising their hands heavenward, answer "Amen!"[23]

The expenses entailed in such an elaborate wedding would often bring complete economic ruin to the family, much the same as Caucasian funerals. Ladyženskij implies, however, that such expensive weddings are a thing of the past.[24]

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. As our example of a Chechen marriage we have chosen that of the Ingushi, for this group of Chechens has preserved much more of their ancient culture than any other. In so doing, however, we must make allowance for tribal differences.

[20] Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 46—49, from whom we have also taken the description of the "Reconciliation." Hahn gives us a few examples of these lyrics, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

[21] Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[22] Dirr, AGKB, p. 25.

[23] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 199.

[24] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 208. See also Dubrovin, *Istorija* for a fairly good description of a Cherkess wedding, I, i, pp. 142 ff, 147 f.

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however, we must make allowance for tribal differences. The Ingush wedding has been described especially well by Jakovlev.[25]

There is excitement in the village,[26] and the whole atmosphere is festive. Before one of the Ingush houses a crowd is gathering, the riders towering above all. There is reason for this excitement and festivity, for a son is being married. Inside the house, too, there is excitement—but perhaps we should call it "activity" instead. A sheep is being slaughtered, *braga* is being brewed, cakes are being baked. But in spite of all this hustle, there seems to be time and reason enough to interrupt all work—just for a moment—the butcher, the brewer, the baker, one and all, go to the door and gaze a moment at the crowd as it begins to form into a semi-orderly wedding procession. At the head we see the proud father of the groom, and behind him his male relatives and some girls. Even billy-goats and rams are there (gifts for the bride's family)—all are there except the groom. He and one of his comrades disappeared several days ago and have not been heard of since. (The bride vanished from her home too, but by now she has most likely returned.) The bridegroom is no doubt "hiding" with a neighbour. The whole village is excited—everybody, we are told, except the groom, for etiquette demands that he act as unconcerned as if marriage were an everyday affair.

Men on horseback, men, women, and noisy children on creaky carts or on foot, wend their way down the dusty village road. When they reach the bride's house her father dashes out in front of the procession and with beaming face welcomes all heartily. The *pandir* (a native three-stringed instrument) begins a joyful wedding tune and all join in the customary marriage songs. Formerly the girls would form into two contending choirs, the friends of the groom against the friends of the bride, alternately singing songs and trying to out-ridicule the other,[27] a veritable battle of tongues and voices.

Singing, dancing, and feasting, continue till evening, when the procession is formed again (but this time not without the bride). The horsemen now gallop off and begin their wild, dangerous wedding races.[28]

As soon as the procession reaches the groom's house, the bride enters the *saklia* and receives some honey and butter, coyly listening to the words "Be thou ever soft as butter and ever sweet as honey."

After this little ceremony she is led behind a curtain where she must remain for the next few days, entertained only by a number of girl-companions.

The formal marriage contract takes place according to the simple Islamic rite. The mullah, as usual, presides, while the parents of the bride and groom make the contract.

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[25] Jakovlev, *Ingushi*, pp. 52—56.
See also Dubrovin's description, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 430—435.

[26] A year or two may elapse after the betrothal, the time of marriage depending mainly on how soon the *kalym* can be paid. Cf. Berže, *Čečnja i Čečency*, p. 98.

[27] For texts of wedding songs see Jakovlev, *l. c.*

[28] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt, etc.," p. 21. Horseraces play an important part in funerals throughout the Caucasus. See R. Bleichsteiner, "Rossweihe und Pferderennen im Totenkult der kaukasischen Völker," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Salzburg-Leipzig, 1936, pp. 414—495.

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585 customs of Lesghians in general,[37] and, finally, Halil Beg Mussayassul's description in his *Das Land der letzten Ritter*.[38]

The wedding day has finally arrived and all acquaintances and relatives have been invited. The young people begin to assemble at the groom's house quite early in the morning, while the older people do not make their appearence till the arrival of the bride. After feasting and dancing has begun at the groom's house, two men and two women—usually relatives of the groom—are commissioned to bring the bride to her new home.[39] In the Province of Kazikumukh usually 10 to 15 persons of each sex are sent;[40] in Sakataly, four to twelve.[41] In a similar manner, the bride chooses four persons from among her relatives, two uncles, called *varkhkani* ("fellow-travellers") and two aunts, called *kakurtsanti* ("they who lead the bride by the hand").[42] The procession, or the delegation, as the case may be, proceeds to the house where the bride is staying at the time. (In Avaria, she is at one of her relative's, whereas in Dargwa and Kazikumukh Province, she is always at home.[43]) On arriving, the delegation solemnly extend to the bride a triple invitation to join them.[44]

After the guests have been entertained, the bridal procession begins to move slowly in the direction of the groom's house. Some boys are at the head of the procession carrying lighted torches, for generally the procession does not begin before dusk. Other children, noisier than ever, carry the bride's wedding gifts (usually kitchen utensils).[45] During the whole procession the two aunts are constantly at the bride's side, living up to their name *kakvurtsanti*, "they who lead the bride by the hand."[46]

Though dressed in beautiful silk, the bride must not be too particular about keeping her wedding gown spotless, an impossible task indeed. When the procession passes under a window, a handful of flour is poured on her,[47] a custom which, according to Dalgat's manuscript, signifies "luck as pure as the flour that is poured on the bride."[48]

Almost at every bend of the road, or wherever the road narrows down, there is a crowd of village urchins and young people who obstruct the way and [273] will not permit the procession to continue till they receive some of their favourite *buza*[49] and dainties.[50]

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[37] *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 566—573.
[38] Munich, 1936, pp. 169—175.
[39] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 185.
[40] Gabiev, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
[41] Fon-Plotto, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 f.
[42] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*, Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31, calls them *kakvurtsanti*, *kak* meaning "hand" and *vutsis meaning* "to hold."
[43] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[44] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, pp. 185 f.
[45] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Gabiev, *l. c.*
[46] Amirov, *l. c.* Kovalevskij, *l. c.* In Sakataly, according to Kovalevskij's own observation, the bride rides on a horse led by the bride's maternal uncle (Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 186).
[47] Amirov, *l. c.* Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[48] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[49] *Buza* is a kind of beer: millet is brewed and allowed to ferment, after which honey is added.
[50] Amirov, *l. c.*; Kovalevskij, *l. c.*

000 spades. The chaff is used as cattle-feed.

C. G. 245 In the plains, especially in Kakhetia, the production of wine plays an important part in the rural economy. Numerous sorts of grapes are distinguished under locally varying names; the word for "wine," ghvino, [192] seems to be a loan-word from pre-literary Armenian. In Western Georgia the vines are allowed to climb on trees, mostly poplars and beeches; they grow half wild and untended and may reach an age of 50 years or more before they are rooted out and replaced by young plants. The vines yielding the renowned Kakhetian wines grow low, in carefully tended vineyards, most of which are artificially irrigated. The grapes are gathered in C. G. 273 September-October and poured into wine presses made of stone or wood (sac'nekheli), where the men tread them out by foot. The juice and skins are allowed to ferment together; in the West, in the pressing-trough C. G. [415] itself, and in Kakhetia in large earthern jugs with a pointed bottom (ch'uri), which are sunk into the ground. These jugs are smeared with naphtha on the inside, which gives the wine a peculiar taste, similar to the Greek rezzinato. When the wine is ready, it is stored in similar jugs, up to eight feet high and five feet in diameter. For transportation the wine is scooped out and poured into cattle- or goat-skins also treated with naphtha.

C. G. 245 Fruits (apricots, peaches, cherries, figs, walnuts, almonds, sweet chestnuts,

## FOOD

C. G. 262

The basic food of the average Caucasian consists of various kinds of home-baked bread and cakes, milk (often used sour), diverse kinds of cheese, rice, onions and garlic, cucumbers, melons, etc. Very common is also the use of a thick gruel (R. mamalyga) prepared out of millet, corn or wheat. A common Georgian dish, which spread also to N. W. Caucasus, is the lobia, made out of cooked and mashed beans with shredded onions and aromatic herbs; the same is true of the Georgian kharcho, a meat-sauce with nuts. The Circassians prepare a special dish of chicken in a gravy of butter, aromatic herbs and pepper. The main warm dish in Dagestan consists of noodles (cut of various kinds of dough) cooked in water, drained, and flavored with cheese, garlic, or other condiments. Meat is eaten mostly on special occasions; an all-Caucasian dish is mutton roasted on the spit (R. shashlyk); the Persian pilaw, rice cooked with meat and flavored with spices, has also found widespread popularity in the Caucasus. The Georgians in the lowland drink wine, the Tush, Pshav and Khevsur brew beer (as do the Ossetes); the Circassians prepare a beverage out of millet to which, after fermentation, honey is added (R. buza).

C. G. 273

C.O. 796 778 objects the dzuar enjoys the highest degree of reverence. The word dzuar is of Georgian origin and means "the cross," then "the saint," and further "a sanctuary." Churches are often built at the side of, or in the place of, such old sanctuaries, the most famous of which, Rekom, is situated between the village Zai and the Zai glacier. It is described as a very small, low, square room with two tiny windows. The roof is covered with straw, the walls and ceilings are adorned with old rugs and priestly garments. There are all kinds of things on the floor, such as images of saints, candles, jewelry, arrows, etc., and similar things are also to be seen outside of the sanctuary. In the immediate neighborhood there are numerous stone houses covered with plank roofs serving as shelters for the pilgrims who stay there for two weeks from the first Saturday in May, sacrificing, eating, dancing and singing.

C.O. 796 782 At the Ossets' festivals the killing of animals is accompanied by appropriate sacrificial hymns. The sacrifice is performed by the eldest member of the assembly who, before the slaughtering, burns the sign of the cross on the animal's muzzle and behind its right ear with a glowing coal. A special feature of festivals is the drinking of K'umäl, the native beverage of millet, araq, brandy, and bägäny, beer. The flesh of the animal is eaten, the bones piled up in a heap, the blood is collected in a vessel and buried, and the animal's head is hung on a tree. The sacrifice in honor of

C.O. [273]